

Sūrah 103

Al-'Asr

(The Time)

(Makkan Period)

Title

al-'asr (time), the opening word of the *Sūrah*, also serves as its title.

Period of Revelation

Although Mujāhid, Qatādah and Muqātil consider it as Madīnan, the majority of Qur'ān scholars recognize this as a Makkan *Sūrah*. In terms of its contents, it sounds Makkan: it spells out Islamic teachings in succinct, pithy sentences, all of which left an indelible mark on listeners and which could be easily memorized.

Subject Matter and Themes

The *Sūrah* stands out as a masterpiece of pithy presentation. In a few choice words it says as much as would fill huge volumes. Categorically, it shows both the right and evil paths, leading to man's success or disaster. Imām Shāfi'i aptly remarks that one's

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reflection on this *Sūrah* suffices for guidance. The Prophet's Companions held this *Sūrah* in high esteem as is evident from the following report by 'Abd Allāh ibn Ḥiṣn al-Dārimī: "Whenever two Companions met, they did not part their company until they recited the *Sūrah al-'Asr* to each other," (Tabarānī).